



**A**s I begin my second year as commissioner of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, I am pleased to present the agency's *State of the Environment Report 2000*.

This report marks the third year that IDEM has published a *State of the Environment Report*. The first report set a benchmark for environmental data. Subsequent reports have shown the progress we have made toward making Indiana a cleaner, healthier place to live. And the *State of the Environment Report 2000* highlights the environmental challenges yet to be solved.

Sometimes the environmental challenges that remain stop us in our tracks. Such was the case in 1999 when central Indiana witnessed a widespread contamination and fish kill in the White River. The state is pursuing the responsible persons and will hold them accountable. Working together, we will eventually restore the fish populations in the White River and enhance its use and enjoyment. This contamination has clearly reminded many Hoosiers from across the state about the importance of our natural resources and has provided new resolve to protect those resources in the future.

In order to protect our resources, we must first understand their current environmental health. We have endeavored to present a report that is both readable and easily understandable for all Hoosiers but yet provides useful data for Hoosiers for whom the environment is an avocation, a vocation or both. We gathered valuable input from comment cards, electronic mail and advisory groups to improve the quality of information contained in this year's report. I encourage you to complete and return the comment card on the back cover of this report to give us your ideas on how to further improve the information presented.

While the printed pages memorialize this report for posterity, we have also provided an electronic version on IDEM's Web site. The Internet provides more detailed information and makes the *State of the Environment Report 2000* available to literally tens of thousands of Hoosiers and people worldwide who visit our Web site.

Knowledge is power and if the information we share in this report empowers people to make a difference in the environment, then the *State of the Environment Report 2000* will have served a valuable purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori F. Kaplan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lori F. Kaplan  
Commissioner

